



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2020-1131; Project Identifier MCAI-2020-00613-R;

Amendment 39-21445; AD 2021-05-02]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The FAA is adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all Airbus Helicopters Model AS350B, AS350BA, AS350B1, AS350B2, AS350B3, AS350C, and AS350D helicopters; Model AS355E, AS355F, AS355F1, AS355F2, AS355N, and AS355NP helicopters; and Model EC130B4 and EC130T2 helicopters. This AD was prompted by a report of failed main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws. This AD requires determining whether the helicopter has been operated in a severe environment since the last inspection of the main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws, an inspection of the main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws if the helicopter has been operated in a severe environment, and replacement of the main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws if necessary, as specified in a European Aviation Safety Agency (now European Union Aviation Safety Agency) (EASA) AD, which is incorporated by reference. The FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: This AD is effective [INSERT DATE 35 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of a certain publication listed in this AD as of [INSERT DATE 35 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: For material incorporated by reference (IBR) in this AD, contact the EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; phone: +49 221 8999 000; email: ADs@easa.europa.eu; Internet: www.easa.europa.eu. You may find this material on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>. You may view this material at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 817-222-5110. It is also available in the AD docket on the Internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2020-1131.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2020-1131; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this final rule, any comments received, and other information. The address for Docket Operations is U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Hal Jensen, Aerospace Engineer, Operational Safety Branch, FAA, 470 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Washington, DC 20024; phone: 202-267-9167; email: hal.jensen@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Discussion

The EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2017-0032, dated February 17, 2017; corrected

February 20, 2017 (EASA AD 2017-0032) (also referred to as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or the MCAI), to correct an unsafe condition for all Airbus Helicopters Model AS 350 B, AS 350 BA, AS 350 BB, AS 350 B1, AS 350 B2, AS 350 B3, and AS 350 D helicopters; AS 355 E, AS 355 F, AS 355 F1, AS 355 F2, AS 355 N, and AS 355 NP helicopters; and EC 130 B4 and EC 130 T2 helicopters. Model AS 350 BB helicopters are not certificated by the FAA and are not included on the U.S. type certificate data sheet; this AD therefore does not include those helicopters in the applicability. This AD also applies to Airbus Helicopter Model AS 350C helicopters because these helicopters have a similar design and are included on the U.S. type certificate data sheet.

The FAA issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to amend 14 CFR part 39 by adding an AD that would apply to all Airbus Helicopters Model AS350B, AS350BA, AS350B1, AS350B2, AS350B3, AS350C, and AS350D helicopters; Model AS355E, AS355F, AS355F1, AS355F2, AS355N, and AS355NP helicopters; and Model EC130B4 and EC130T2 helicopters. The NPRM published in the *Federal Register* on December 15, 2020 (85 FR 81157). The NPRM was prompted by a report of failed main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws. The NPRM proposed to require determining whether the helicopter has been operated in a severe environment since the last inspection of the main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws, an inspection of the main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws if the helicopter has been operated in a severe environment, and replacement of the main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws if necessary, as specified in an EASA AD.

The FAA is issuing this AD to address failed main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws, which could lead to disconnection of the main rotor hub-to-mast attachment, possibly resulting in loss of control of the helicopter. See the MCAI for additional background information.

Comments

The FAA gave the public the opportunity to participate in developing this final rule. The FAA has considered the comments received. An individual indicated agreement with the NPRM.

Conclusion

The FAA reviewed the relevant data, considered the comment received, and determined that air safety and the public interest require adopting this final rule as proposed, except for minor editorial changes. The FAA has determined that these minor changes:

- Are consistent with the intent that was proposed in the NPRM for addressing the unsafe condition; and
- Do not add any additional burden upon the public than was already proposed in the NPRM.

Related Service Information Under 1 CFR Part 51

EASA AD 2017-0032 describes procedures for determining whether the helicopter has been operated in a severe environment since the last inspection of the main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws, an inspection of the main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws for corrosion and damage (damage includes cracks, dents, and bolt distortion) if the helicopter was operated in a severe environment, and replacement of the main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws if necessary. This material is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

Differences Between this AD and the MCAI

EASA AD 2017-0032 does not apply to Airbus Helicopter Model AS350C helicopters, which are included on the U.S. type certificate data sheet. However, this AD

applies to Airbus Helicopter Model AS350C helicopters because those helicopters have a similar design to the helicopters identified in EASA AD 2017-0032.

Where the service information specified in paragraph (3) of EASA AD 2017-0032 specifies to contact Airbus Helicopters if damage or corrosion exceeds existing criteria, this AD requires replacing the affected screws using a method approved by the Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA.

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD affects 1,220 helicopters of U.S. registry. The FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this AD:

Estimated costs for required determination of helicopter operation in a severe environment

| Labor cost | Parts cost | Cost per product | Cost on U.S. operators |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 work-hours X \$85 per hour = \$85 | \$0 | \$85 | \$103,700 |

The FAA estimates that it would take about 1 hour per product to comply with the reporting requirement in this AD. The average labor rate is \$85 per hour. Based on these figures, the FAA estimates the cost of reporting the inspection results on U.S. operators to be \$103,700, or \$85 per product.

The FAA estimates the following costs to do any necessary on-condition actions that would be required based on the results of any required actions. If a helicopter is determined to have been operated in a severe environment, an inspection of the main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws will be required. If there is corrosion or damage to any of the screws, replacement of the affected screws will be required. The FAA has no way of determining the number of aircraft that might need these on-condition actions:

Estimated costs of on-condition actions

| Labor cost | Parts cost | Cost per product |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 4 work-hours X \$85 per hour = | \$106 | \$446 |

Paperwork Reduction Act

A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a current valid OMB control number. The control number for the collection of information required by this AD is 2120-0056. The paperwork cost associated with this AD has been detailed in the Costs of Compliance section of this document and includes time for reviewing instructions, as well as completing and reviewing the collection of information. Therefore, all reporting associated with this AD is mandatory. Comments concerning the accuracy of this burden and suggestions for reducing the burden should be directed to Information Collection Clearance Officer, Federal Aviation Administration, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177-1524.

Authority for this Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs, describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

The FAA is issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements. Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

This AD will not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This AD will not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this AD:

- (1) Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866,
- (2) Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and
- (3) Will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA amends 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

- 1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

- 2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

AD 2021-05-02 Airbus Helicopters: Amendment 39-21445; Docket No.

FAA-2020-1131; Project Identifier MCAI-2020-00613-R.

(a) Effective Date

This airworthiness directive (AD) is effective [INSERT DATE 35 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to all Airbus Helicopters, certificated in any category, as identified in paragraphs (c)(1) through (3) of this AD.

(1) Model AS350B, AS350BA, AS350B1, AS350B2, AS350B3, AS350C, and AS350D helicopters.

(2) Model AS355E, AS355F, AS355F1, AS355F2, AS355N, and AS355NP helicopters.

(3) Model EC130B4 and EC130T2 helicopters.

(d) Subject

Joint Aircraft System Component (JASC) Code 6200, Main Rotor System.

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by a report of failed main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws. The FAA is issuing this AD to address failed main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws, which could lead to disconnection of the main rotor hub-to-mast attachment, possibly resulting in loss of control of the helicopter.

(f) Compliance

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

(g) Requirements

Except as specified in paragraph (h) of this AD: Comply with all required actions and compliance times specified in, and in accordance with, European Aviation Safety Agency (now European Union Aviation Safety Agency) (EASA) AD 2017-0032, dated February 17, 2017; corrected February 20, 2017 (EASA AD 2017-0032).

(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2017-0032

(1) Where EASA AD 2017-0032 refers to its effective date, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(2) The “Remarks” section of EASA AD 2017-0032 does not apply to this AD.

(3) Paragraph (4) of EASA AD 2017-0032 specifies to report inspection results to Airbus Helicopters within a certain compliance time. For this AD, report inspection results at the applicable time specified in paragraph (h)(3)(i) or (ii) of this AD.

(i) If the inspection was done on or after the effective date of this AD: Submit the report within 30 days after the inspection.

(ii) If the inspection was done before the effective date of this AD: Submit the report within 30 days after the effective date of this AD.

(4) Where EASA AD 2017-0032 refers to flight hours (FH), this AD requires using hours time-in-service.

(5) Where the service information specified in paragraph (3) of EASA AD 2017-0032 specifies to contact Airbus Helicopters if damage or corrosion exceeds existing criteria, for this AD, replace the affected screws using a method approved by the Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA. For a repair method to be approved by the Manager, International Validation Branch, as required by this paragraph, the Manager's approval letter must specifically refer to this AD.

(6) Although the service information referenced in EASA AD 2017-0032 specifies to discard certain parts, this AD does not include that requirement.

(i) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the manager of the International Validation Branch, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (j) of this AD. Information may be emailed to: 9-AVS-AIR-730-AMOC@faa.gov.

(2) Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

(j) Related Information

For more information about this AD, contact Hal Jensen, Aerospace Engineer, Operational Safety Branch, FAA, 470 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Washington, DC 20024; phone: 202-267-9167; email: hal.jensen@faa.gov.

(k) Material Incorporated by Reference

(1) The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference (IBR) of the service information listed in this paragraph under 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51.

(2) You must use this service information as applicable to do the actions required by this AD, unless this AD specifies otherwise.

(i) European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2017-0032, dated February 17, 2017; corrected February 20, 2017.

(ii) [Reserved]

(3) For EASA AD 2017-0032, contact the EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; phone: +49 221 8999 000; email: ADs@easa.europa.eu; Internet: www.easa.europa.eu. You may find this EASA AD on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>.

(4) You may view this service information at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 817-222-5110. This material may be found in the AD docket on the Internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2020-1131.

(5) You may view this material that is incorporated by reference at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, email fedreg.legal@nara.gov, or go to <https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations.html>.

Issued on February 17, 2021.

Gaetano A. Sciortino, Deputy Director for Strategic Initiatives,
Compliance & Airworthiness Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.

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